

Archive

Celebrities Raise Funds for Tsunami Victims

October 29, 2009 12:29 PM

Madonna, Elton John, and Stevie Wonder were among dozens of entertainers who helped raise funds for tsunami relief in a U.S. benefit concert Saturday that was broadcast around the United States. Some of the biggest names in music and movies joined the effort to help the millions left homeless by the disaster.

The two-hour program originated in Los Angeles, New York and London. It featured news footage of the devastating tsunami and the stories of some whose lives it shattered in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and other parts of Asia and Africa.

The actor Morgan Freeman was one of many who appeared, asking viewers to call and offer donations. The funds will go to American Red Cross International Response Fund. He said "170,000 people have died. In the next few weeks, that number could double or triple. Right now, we could all work toward one goal: How to bring help to these people in their time of need," he said.

Former U.S presidents George Bush senior and Bill Clinton also appeared on the program. President Bush has asked both to spearhead the U.S fundraising efforts for the tsunami victims.

Actor Bruce Willis said the evening's musical performances from artists like Norah Jones, Sheryl Crow, Tom Jones and Eric Clapton showed the healing power of music. "And tonight is about healing. When the world says please, let us help, extraordinary things begin to happen," he said.

Actor Robert Downey Junior spoke of the needs of those in stricken communities, initially for basics like cooking utensils, and later for things like

school supplies. We have a choice, said actor Clint Eastwood. We can either look away or we can help.

The actor Robert De Niro spoke of the force and devastation of the earthquake and tsunami that followed. But tonight we can participate in a force more powerful than that, the power of giving, and help change the lives of those most directly affected by this tragedy. And in the process, we change our hearts because you can't give and remain the same," he said.

Celebrities manned the phone banks to speak with those who called to make their contributions. The effort was reminiscent of a televised fundraiser in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, which raised nearly \$130 million for the families of the victims.

Saturday's event was organized by the NBC Universal Television Group and was aired its flagship NBC broadcast network and several affiliated cable networks. NBC executives say they will release fundraising totals later.

RELATED STORIES

Archive

Scuba Diving Instructor Tells of Tsunami Horror on Thai Beach

The tsunami that struck South and Southeast Asia spawned stories of horror. Even many who lived through it say they could not comprehend what was happening. VOA correspondent Gary Thomas talked to one American who was caught in the tsunami on a beach in Thailand, and found some newfound skills put to good use. Paul Landgraver loves the water. But, as he found out on December 26, the feeling was not mutual. On that day, December 26, the 33-year-old American...

Archive

Rebuilding The Fishing Industry, After Tsunami

From Asia to Africa, the December tsunami killed at least 160-thousand people, and scoured shorelines of buildings and other structures. Among the hardest hit were those who made their living from the sea. For millions of fishers and their families, the Indian Ocean was the source of their food and...

Archive

Australia Holds Day of Mourning For Tsunami Victims

Australians have observed a minute of silence as part of a national Day of Mourning for the victims of Asia's tsunami. Commemorative services at mosques, churches and temples have been held, while flags fly at half-staff. Religious leaders say the disaster has brought Australia closer to its stricken neighbors to the north. The Australian government says Sunday's national day of mourning is "an important part of the healing process" after the horrors of...

Archive

Timor Extends Helping Hand to Tsunami-Hit Old Enemy

Fund raising effort for victims of December's Indian Ocean tsunami has surpassed most expectations. Countries rich and poor around the world have dug deep to contribute, perhaps none more so than Asia's poorest and newest country: East Timor. It was a tsunami fundraiser with a difference: on one side the Army, on the other the police, and in the middle in a bright yellow referee jersey, the president of East Timor, Xanana Gusmao. On Saturday there...

By **Doug Keatinge**

